

Gladys Barker

Oral History
October 13, 2011

CD #453

Recorded and transcribed by Matthew Sandau as part of an Eagle Scout Project.

Matthew: Matthew Sandau interviewing Gladys Barker on October 13, 2011 at the residence of Gladys Barker located at 3752 South 2500 East in Vernal, Utah.

Matthew: Where were you born?

Gladys: I was borned, right up here about two miles in a red brick house and I lived there till after I got married. And I was born the...ah 23rd of May, no, 30th of May, 1923. My mind... might have to give you the wrong answers, Clark you correct me...

Everyone: (laughs)

Clark: Oh, no problem

Gladys: I was born the 30th of May, 1923 in Vernal, Uintah County, Utah.

Matthew: Hum... Were you the... were you an only child or did you have brothers and sister?

Gladys: Pardon me?

Matthew: Were you the...

Gladys: No I was the fifth of eleven, fifth girl of eleven children.

Matthew: And your parents' names?

Gladys: Eh... Jenny Watkins Kolb, my mother's name

Clark: And your father?

Gladys: Eh... Lorenzo Watkins (Ren was his nickname)

Matthew: Ah... where did you, hum... what memories do you remember as a child. I mean... what things do you remember the most?

Gladys: Oh... we was kind a poor... we didn't... we just ah... mostly played games and we... ah... always looked forward to Christmas. And ah... we had, I had to walk two miles to school. A mile down to the school and a mile back. And I started

school when I was seven. And... we always looked forward to Christmas, we never got a lot of toys but we always really happy to get what we did get. I'd usually get... I'd get a doll every Christmas, me and my sister and... My father had some cows and sheep, and we had a pasture just over across from where we lived, and we'd have to herd the cows out of the grain or out of the alfalfa. And we'd sit... when he was cutting grain, we'd sit behind the stocks of grain to get out of the sun and we'd make us an... eh... sunflower girls. You know how the sunflowers come out and look like their skirt, and we'd put an... eh... thing on its head to make it look like a sunflower girls and we'd ah... make playhouses out in the yard and ah... we didn't.... I don't know if there is anything here that is interesting, but...

Matthew: Hum... what were some important people in your life, as a child? Hum...

Gladys: Well... my aunt, just lived across the road, we didn't... my mother had a sister, she lived about a mile and a half from us, and she was more my favorite aunt then... and she was a widow... and mother would had a team of horses, or my dad did, mother would hook up the wagon and we'd go down and pick her and her children up and we'd drive down to Green River... you... Green River you know is down this way, and they'd... mother and her would walk out in the water to see if there's any holes, in the river you know to see if there was any holes... and if there wasn't any holes then we could play there in the river for a while, then she'd put us in the wagon and bring us back... bring her back home. And sometimes mother would just, had a little wagon, you know the little wagons the kids use to have, I'd get one out here now, but anyway, mother would put the baby that couldn't walk in this wagon and pull her down to my Aunt Ida's, Ida was her name, and she'd visit down there all day then she'd come back and... we'd just walk, you know, down there and back... and... she was about the most important one in our life. But... my dad's mother and father lived just across the... the street, come down this way, and we lived on this street... went this way, and right a crossed here the was a cannal that went just the side of the road, and my grandma and grandpa, mothers mother... dads mother and father lived on this side of the street from us. And he use'ta... we enjoyed him... he use to a... set out under the pine trees or out under... it had to be a shade tree and he'd sit out on the lawn and sing and lots a times we wash his feet... put his feet in a... water (laugh) and wash his feet. Eh.... He was pretty good to us, he... and mother... his... my dads' mother had a horse and called "Old Pet," she had a buggy... she took it to Relief Society and it had a little, oh I don't know what you'd call it, end gate or something on the back and we'd set in that and she'd take us to Relief Society and Primary and that, and we'd ride in that. My cousin was ride'n in the back and she fell out and bumped her head and she was unconscious for a little while but... (laugh)... we made it. Don't know whether that.... Is interesting to you or not... but

Matthew: Everything's interesting...

Gladys: But that was our life a lot like that.

Matthew: Um... what sort of chores did you do, uh, as a child?

Gladys: Chores... a... well we herded the cows and there's, we'd always have to pull weeds for the pigs. We had you know pigs in a pen and we'd pull red roots and alfalfa and feed pigs. And that's about all the chores we had to do.

Matthew: Um... Um what where your sch., what... what were your school years like, um as a teacher?

Gladys: Well, I started ta school when I was in...a seven years old. And, I went to the first grade, and then... (*phone rings*) Excuse me will ya... and when I was in the second grade I went a... oh maybe half a year and then I got promoted into the third grade, and I went second third grade one year. Nobody'd never believe me (everyone laughs), they didn't think I was that smart (laugh) well I wasn't really smart but I'd aa... this our teacher had a boy in there and he couldn't read very good. So she'd, we'd let us all read and then she'd, we'd just sit en...aa... just sit while she'd help this boy read. And I think that why she stuck, put me out there cause I didn't, your know I read, I was a pretty good reader and I did make the second and third grade in one year.

Matthew: That was your favorite subject, in um school?

Gladys: Oh... I think spelling. I was good in spelling. We'd you know stand in and a line and spell, and we'd start down here and come on up and I was always, always the last one to stand cause I, you know I could spell. But I could do arithmetic, I had a neighbor friend and he sat right back of me. He couldn't a... a... spell and I couldn't do arithmetic, so I'd do his spelling and he'd do my arithmetic (laughs). Kind a cheated, we made a deal (laugh).

Clark: A little cheating huh?

Matthew: Um...

Gladys: We exchanged valentines on Valentine's Day, each one of us you know would buy valentines and we'd put'em in a box er somthin, and whenever they'd do it out, why with my name on it, then they'd take it, and we had quit a lot a nice valentines that way an.

Matthew: Um...

Gladys: Didn't you come here once before Clark? I thought you did.

Clark: Yeah

Matthew: Who do you think was the most important person you met in school?

Gladys: What know?

Matthew: The most important person you have ever met in school?

Gladys: Oh... don't know. I... I kind of liked them all you know... I don't. I liked teachers, I liked all my teachers and... I didn't have any special, I don't think any special one, I just liked them all.

Matthew: Um...what, what yer... what where your interests... um as a child? Um... what did you... most... your hobbies, what were yer?

Gladys: Oh... I don't... don't know if I ever had any special hobbies or anything, but...

Matthew: Um...

Gladys: I can't remember any... doing any special hobbies or anything I had.

Matthew: Alright...

Gladys: I was a... I went to church and Sunday School and Primary. I was president, ur..a secretary of the Sunday School when I was about 14 or 15. I enjoyed doing that.

Matthew: So... um... do you know when you graduated from school?

Gladys: No... I a... graduated from the sixth grade. Don't know what year. But then after the sixth grade we had to go through Junior High. Our school house, we didn't have a very good school house... we had, we just had six grades in that... in that school house, and it was a brick house. I mean it didn't have no... a, we just had a bell to ring you know that pulls... the... so I was kind of liked to get out of that, but we had to ride the bus to Junior High to the seventh and eighth grade. And I went up there then I got out of that in the seventh and eighth grade went in ta the ninth, tenth and eleventh grade, I just went to the tenth grade... and I didn't have any special... I don't know as I had any special subject I took or not, but a...

Clark: Did you graduate from High School?

Gladys: No.

Clark: No. So you just went to tenth grade?

Gladys: I lost all my talent after I got out of third grade.

Everyone: (laughs)

Clark: You just go to tenth grade is as far as you went?

Gladys: Yeah... uhha I went partly to the six... the tenth grade, but I didn't graduate from it or anything. But we a... oh let's see what was it... us to have a program or something every Friday and we could always go in to the... a... hall or whatever they called it and watch a, the program they had, but a... I a... I did take sewing, and I enjoyed sewing in a school.. but a.

Matthew: Um... a, as a young adult, um... wh... when was the first time you ever left home?

Gladys: Never did leave home till I was married in 1941. I met my a... husband in... lets' see... I was sixteen, not quite sixteen when I met him. One Easter me and my girlfriend was walking kind of over there south of our place and he come along in a Model-A pickup, and we got in with him and he took us for a ride and then he took me home, and I never went with him for about... two months later he come to the house one night and wanted me to go to the show with him. So I went to the show with him. And a... I want with him for two years and then got married. I just turned eighteen the 30th of May and I got married the 4th of June in 41.

Matthew: Wow...

Gladys: We had quite a lot a fun... but... we didn't go to a lot of wild parties or anything, my husband was really a... I'd say a good guy. (laugh) He... profaned a little bit and he drank a little bit before we got married, but he a... he always treated me nice and a... so I a, really... it was two years we went together before we got married, it was enjoyable. He went away to work one summer... you know he worked away from home quite a bit, but a...

Matthew: What did he do to work?

Gladys: Pardon me?

Matthew: What did he do to work?

Gladys: Well he just went to work for some man in Colorado, helped him hull hay, drove bailer, a helped him hull his hay and things like that, and then he went to a... to a... Staley's Coal Mine when he was fifteen, he work up there, Staley's Coal Mine. And he went around ya know and done different things, he didn't have anything special... but

Matthew: So...um... how many children did you have? Um...

Gladys: Five. Three boys: Terry H. Barker, Bryce S. Barker, Monte G. Barker. And two girls: Shirley Kay Barker (Atwood), Kenna Sue Barker (Cook).

Matthew: What was the most memorable experience of your children? Um...

Gladys: Well, uh... my oldest son was about... what was it... oh how old was he, let me think... he was born in three... forty-three and my husband was drafted into the army... when my little, uh my boy was about... oh five or six months old. I use to stayed at my home and met up with my mother's once in a while and stayed up there a night or two, and I stayed in my home with my boy until he come home. He went in February and he come home in a... hum, let's see when was it... August or something. He went to a... Fort... oh I can't remember this place he went in Cana... ur a Alabama for his basic training. But he went down there and then he come back up home and had a vacation, a little visit at home there with me there he went ta... was shipped to... see where did he go from there Clark? (laugh)

Clark: Not sure.

Gladys: To Maryland, and he was shipped to Maryland to... England. And he was over there... let's see, I think he was shipped in August from Maryland and in October he was wounded. Got a, shell hit in in the arm and... crippled his arm and a... he was in the hospital till December and he come home for December and he went up to a... Walla Walla Washington ta the hospital and come home in December and he got discharged in June. That was just the story of his army. And then I had ta... let's see he come home in... mm... well let me tell ya a little bit more about. When he was in the hospital, I... my oldest boy was about... let's see 43... he was about two years old or so and I left him with my... a sister-n-law, she lived just over the str... a little ways from me and I left my boy Terry with her, and I went ta the hospital with Ken. And he got discharged in June when he come home, why... that little boy... my little son didn't even hardly know him. He had a stick of wood or something and he went and hit him on the head with it. But he... he didn't even know him. (Laugh) But he finally got to know him. He... then I had another boy in October. Terry was three in August and Bryce was borned in October. And... Terry was borned at home and... Terry wa... Terry was borned at home and Bryce was borned in the hospital. And the rest of them was borned in the hospital, my other three, four was borned in the hospital. And... we got married the 4th of June, my mother and dad was married the 4th of June... and they was a... a... they belonged to a... what they called a Naples Ward when they were a... was married, and they made Davis Ward, and my mother and dad was first couple to go in Davis Ward. And they was the first couple to be married and the bishop of the... was the first bishop of the ward and he was... they was the first couple he married when he was bishop in the ward. That was kind of interesting and they was married the 4th of June and so was me and Ken married the 4th of June, later... and then Terry's... Clarks dad and mother was married the 4th of June, and Terry's daughter and her husband was married the 4th of June, there was five in our family that was married the 4th of June, different years you know, but the 4th of June.

Matthew: Did you ever move when you were married?

Gladys: The first home we had, Ken sister and husband owned a little ol' log house just about a mile from her place. And it was we uh.. We bought it and lived over there anyway. An' it was just a little ol' one room log house and we just fixed it up when we got married. The day we got married we got our equipment we needed to you know start keeping house. We bought us a new bed, well before that, Ken worked out to the Gilsonite mine and he was out there workin' and he got his hand in a cable and cut his finger off, kind of this way. He had to go to the hospital to have it cut off. You know they cut it off at the knuckle. And every time they would put him out why he would fight and they tied him to the table to cut his hand off and he broke the straps so they got him down on the floor and his sister sat on him and the doctor tried to put him out and I guess he they give him all the chloroform they had in the hospital and they couldn't get him plum out. But he hit the doctor and made a big black and blue mark on his arm where he hit him. You know he didn't know what he was doing and they finally got it cut off. He come home, he took the money he got fer his finger getting cut off and that's what we bought our furniture with when we started our home. And he was hauling coal then too, where was that place Clark? It was close to Provo that little uh..

Clark: Heber?

Gladys: No it was uh. It started with a C, anyway he hauled coal down there er uh Well he kept props when we first got married he kept mine props fer uh what's his name? Dave Calder and he cut hauled props for him down to this place and then they brought coal back. An' one night well __ Two days after we got married why we got up at three o'clock in the morning four o'clock in the morning and took this load of logs down to Caslegate and we took them down there and left them and got some coal and come back to mmh oh that place around...I can't remember but just that place up north of Salt Lake or I mean Roosevelt. We took that coal up there and it was late so we stayed up there that night. The next morning when we got home why Ken's brother had a party or something in our house and he'd broke our bed, the board that held the springs and mattress ya'know. He'd broke it so we had to wire it up to get our bed fixed. I've never liked that man since (laughs). We lived there for a little while and then he got a job out to the mine no I can't think cutting

Clark: The gilsonite mine?

Gladys: Uhhuh.. and.. no he cut logs fer uh.. Tom Bil-, Bill Thomas you you remember him He had a saw mill and Ken cut logs for him oh maybe two or three summers. And then he went out to the Gilsonite mines and worked out there. He bought a camper when we was on the mountain, a little ol' camper, and we lived in it. And when he worked in the Gilsonite mine we took it down to the river, down to White River, we camped down there. And he went from there up to Big Bonanza

to the mines, no he went to...Oh I can't keep my stories straight. Before Terry was born, my older boy, he went to Little Emma it was called Little Emma mine and there was three families/people that lived out there and he worked out there for awhile and then when Terry was born why we come in from out there just before Terry was born. Then after Terry was born... I can't keep my stories straight.

Clark: It's alright

Gladys: Oh anyway we went out to the Gilsonite mine and he worked out there. He uh Just the fall before my second boy was born they had an accident in the mine and him and his friend that was working in it fell a hundred feet. His friend got killed and it didn't hurt Ken. It just kind of, he had ashfill in his ears and around on his face, but it didn't hurt him. But he was unconscious and he didn't know.. he didn't know anything. He said when he was down there he said some man wanted him to go with him before they brought him up to the top and he said this man wanted him to go with him but he wouldn't go with him. And when he got up to the top he told them that there was a dead man down there. So they went down and got this friend of his and every bone in his body was broke. And it had killed him. I guess it wasn't his time to go cause Ken didn't go. And then I think he quit that mine...anyway he just working in the Gilsonite mine and hauled logs all our married lives.

Matthew: So um while he was in the war did you have to work for um?

Gladys: No, I didn't have to work. I just stayed home and tend my baby. I think he got so much money from the veterans, I don't know what they paid, I didn't work. I didn't want to go work and leave my boy so I just stayed home and tended him.

Matthew: So uh where was your favorite place to visit? um

Gladys: Oh we traveled around quite a lot. I went...what was Wilkins name?

Clark: Mike?

Gladys: No Clyde... Was it Clyde Wilkins. He had a bus and he'd take people on tours ya'know around. We'd give him so much and he'd haul us around. I went oh two or three places with him. We went down to where Joseph Smith was in jail and then we went up to the Nauvoo up where the temple was. We went around quite a lot of...oh I think I seen about half of the states in the United States on these tours I went with him. And they was interesting. My husband went on one with me when we went down to where Joseph Smith was in jail. And they took us to Joseph Smith's house where he got killed and I stood right to the end of his bed where he laid and then the window that they threw him out of. There was a big red spot on the floor and they said that's where they killed him, but I don't know if it was all true or not, but that's what they told us. And then we seen...oh

what was that little boy that had a girlfriend, oh I can't think of his name. You should have come years earlier and I could have remembered more. Oh, but anyway we seen his place where he lived and his little girlfriend was Rebecca-Becky, what was his name, Tom Sawyer. We seen where he lived. And then we went on up to where the temple was. They hadn't built the new temple, the old had burnt down, they hadn't built the new one when we was up there, but we went to seen that. Oh I don't know, pretty much any place we went to was interesting.

Matthew: Um throughout your whole life did you ever move a whole lot when you were married?

Gladys: Oh we went down to the river when he worked for the Gilsonite mine and then on the mountain when he worked up there. And then most rest of the time... we built us built three homes on this street. The first one we built we just lived in it. When my oldest son got married we built him a home for him and he wanted to move to Maeser so we sold out first house and moved over into the house we built for him. And then finally we bought some more ground farther over this way and we built this house here. We've lived on this street here for; let's see I don't know how long it was when we bought the first house. We built three houses on this street and I hope this is the last one.(laughs)

Matthew: Um what makes you proud about your posterity?

Gladys: Proud about'em, what did you say now?

Matthew: What are you happy about your posterity?

Gladys: Well, my father's great great grandfather was John Watkins. He was an architect and he built a lot of homes and done quite a lot over in England. But him and his wife wanted to join the church. His mother didn't want him to join the church and she told her daughter she said I'll disown you if you join the church. But they went from...I think this was Kent England where they lived and they went up some place else in England and they joined the church and then they had two children and they come to United States and they went to, I think it was Provo first. They went out to Provo when they come to Utah And he built a lot of homes and worked in the church and everything. They moved up to Midway and he built that great big home there in Midway. First I think-- have you ever seen that? Well, he built that. and uh he was a oh and he done quite a lot in the church. He was a bishop and he use to sing in the church. Well, when he come across the plains he was a bugler and every morning he would have to blow the bugle and at night he would blow it when they went to bed. And he had quite an experience crossing the plains, but he made it. When he got over here he married... he married my grandmother in England and then when he came back over here he met another woman and married her. And he had three wives while he was in Utah. But he could what did they call that when they didn't have to they could live they called paligamists ya'know. And he lived with these three women. He

had that house in Midway, he had a room in every... three rooms in it and it was just like they had their own house you know. But my grandmother was a midwife and she'd go out and help people that were sick and deliver babies and such and such. She didn't couldn't get much sleep. Lots of time she'd be out most of the night she didn't get much sleep. So she didn't want to live in this house with the other two women so grandpa built her a house just kind of kitty corner across from Midway. And she lived in it until she passed away. And grandpa died in 1902. He had something wrong with his stomach and they thought he had cancer so he was going to California to see a doctor. He was on his horse and it was in the winter and the horse slipped and fell and the horn on the saddle went in his stomach and they took him to California and they said that's what made his cancer worse. And he died down there. And then they sold the house to his... well I don't know, just which one of his wives they sold the house to and she kept it for a long time.

Matthew: So um what did you enjoy most about being parents/raising children?

Gladys: (laughs) I don't know if I enjoyed it, they was all too mean. Wasn't you Clark,

Clark: Yeah

Gladys: Grandkids was too well, I enjoyed my children. I'd take them to Sunday school and Primary. My aunt told me I had the meanest kids in the ward, but I didn't believe her then. I thought they was pretty good. We didn't have any trouble with them, I didn't. Before we lived over here we had some cows and Terry and Bryce would go out and milk them. One morning they was out there and they stayed out there for quite awhile. When we went out you know how they were milking the cow? Had a straw in their bag and they pop and the milk would run out and they didn't have to milk her. I shouldn't have told you that I guess.

Clark: Didn't work so good huh

Gladys: Huh

Clark: Didn't work so good

Gladys: No I don't know what Ken said to her but that's why there's milk in the cow.

Matthew: What did you enjoy most about being grandparents?

Gladys: Well, I enjoyed my kids and my grandkids. Terry had three children, Clark was one. And Bryce had five children, my second boy had five and Monte had three. And my Kay, my third daughter, she had twins and it made her seven. And then my youngest girl, Sue, she had six. Kay and Sue, them's my two girls, nearly every Saturday they would come down and we would have dinner and visit and

everything I enjoyed that. We use to go to the mountain. Ken use to take them fishing. I enjoyed them they was good kids.

Matthew: What was Vernal like in your childhood years?

Gladys: Oh, I think Vernal was a pretty good place to live then, but we never had any ya'know trouble with the law or anything like that. I thought it was a pretty good place to live but it sure changed now though.

Matthew: How has the community changed?

Gladys: Now what was that?

Matthew: What things have you witnessed change throughout your life in Vernal?

Gladys: Oh I don't know, not too much. I worked in the Primary in the church quite a lot. I was Primary president for five years. And I was Mutual president for awhile. I didn't see too big of a change in Vernal. Only thing our cars, we didn't have heaters in our cars, ya'know. We had to signal with our hands, ya'know. We didn't have signal lights, we use our hands. There's been quite a little bit of change. And I think gas was 35 cents a gallon. Now you can't even look at it for that. Anyway, we use to go have on the 4th they had outings with the ward. The ward use to put on rodeos and play ball and that and it was kind of interesting. And the theater tickets, I think was 35 cents a ticket to go to the show. Well, there's been a lot of great changes since then but that's been 80 years ago I guess.

Matthew: Um is there anything else you would like to add to this interview?

Gladys: Well, I've lived a lonely old life for 15 years (laughs) but I guess that just comes with life. My husband died 15 years ago. Rhett, Sue's boy bought, we had eleven acres here and he wanted to buy some, so I sold him nine acres and he built him a house just across the road here. And his boy was born eight o'clock in the morning and Ken died four o'clock that night so they named him Tyler Ken. But I've lived here all my life; I've worked in the church. I went to the temple a lot. I've done a lot of temple work. So I ain't you know it's lonesome when you're alone, but it could've been worse. I can't go to the temple now. I can't walk as good as I'd like to and I'm afraid I'd might fall so I don't go to the temple. I go for a marriage or something where I can have somebody help me but. I've done a lot of temple work, done a lot of sealings. And I've got children that works in the temple now and I'm proud of them. Proud of Clark and his positions he holds. All of my kids have really done good in the... all but one, Bryce, he not been one much for church, but the rest of them...Monte was bishop when he lived in Raymond, NM. He was bishop for two years...He was a counselor in the bishopric for I don't know how long and then he was put in as bishop for three years and then he moved up here. He adopted two of his grandkids. They was

twins and he adopted them. And he's raising them. Oh, my life been a happy life, I guess. Maybe some people wouldn't say it was.

Clark: No it's been good.

Matthew: Alright then thank you very much.

Gladys: I worked there (the Family History Center) for 31 years.

Clark: At the Family History Center?

Gladys: Uhhuh after Ken died I didn't enjoy going up there and working, but I worked there 31 years.